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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 000089

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: DEFENSE OFFICIALS REQUEST MORE MILITARY AID

REF: A. ADDIS 87

[B](#). ADDIS 46

[C](#). 07 ADDIS 1535

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Yamamoto for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

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[1](#)1. (C) In January 3 and 4 meetings with Ambassador, DATT, ORA Chief, and P/E Chief, Defense Minister (DefMin) Kuma Demeksa and Chief of Defense Staff (CHOD) Gen. Samora Yonus respectively argued for more U.S. military assistance to Ethiopia to focus more on in-country training to develop Ethiopian military (ENDF) capacity rather than training in the U.S. The Ethiopian Government (GoE) rejected 20 of 27 offered training opportunities in the U.S. in 2007. Both officials used the opportunity of questions on Ethiopia's plans to deploy troops to Darfur to inquire about promised equipment supplies from the U.S. and, in the case of Gen. Samora, to harangue Post for the USG's history of "broken promises" to the ENDF. Ref B details Ethiopian plans to deploy peacekeeping troops to Darfur; responses on Post's inquiries on Ethiopia's arms relationship with North Korea was reported in Ref A. End Summary.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO BUILD ETHIOPIAN CAPACITY

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[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador queried both the DefMin and CHOD as to why the ENDF continues to reject the vast majority of training offers (20 of 27 training offers in the U.S. in 2007) despite Post's successful efforts over the past year to increase significantly U.S. military assistance levels to Ethiopia in specific response to Gen. Samora's demand for more training, equipment, and support. The Ambassador applauded Ethiopia's record as a contributor of peacekeeping troops and argued that senior-level training in the United States could assist the appointment of Ethiopians to command peacekeeping forces in the field. While the DefMin noted the lack of senior-level command skills as a crucial area of interest, both he and the CHOD argued that developing the capacity of the Ethiopian Defense Command and Staff College (EDCSC) (established and supported by the U.S. Embassy, DoD, and CENTCOM) is very important as a means to enhance such skills among the ENDF officer corps more broadly than by one-off trainings for individual ENDF officers in the U.S. Ambassador noted that while this makes sense in training a larger number of officers and NCOs, it would not meet a major concern of General Samora's: for Ethiopian generals to command Ethiopian troops in UN peacekeeping deployments. In Liberia, Ethiopian troops are commanded by generals of other

countries because none of the Ethiopian generals have attended the prerequisite war colleges which are primarily in the U.S., and other advanced military training. While Ethiopian commanders have exceptional battlefield experience and are first rate commanders, the lack of academic training will continue to hold back Ethiopian generals from commanding their own troops in UN peacekeeping deployments.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador noted that two U.S. Army instructors are currently at the EDCSC and a U.S. Air Force instructor will arrive next week, Post's SAO did note that the availability of U.S. trainers is not predictable in light of the U.S. military's current operations tempo and that perhaps this required discussions on bringing Ethiopian trainers up to speed more quickly. While DefMin used the opportunity to encourage the USG to send additional U.S. trainers to the EDCSC to deliver courses and train Ethiopian trainers, the CHOD aggressively argued that despite additional military assistance, Ethiopia reaps only minimal benefits from it due to the high cost of USG personnel and equipment. Gen. Samora specifically raised the problem of five civilian trainers contracted by the Department of State to be the first teachers at the EDCSC. The cost of the contract was USD 3 million. General Samora complained that the that was too expensive and the money could have been used more efficiently to train his officers. (The General was distinctly satisfied, however, that uniformed U.S. military personnel are now teaching at the EDCSC rather than expensive civilian contractors. Still, the General is famous for never saying thank you or expressing appreciation.)

¶4. (C) When Ambassador highlighted that after years of Ethiopian Government requests the USG is again providing

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spare parts to rehabilitate two ENDF C-130 planes, which were provided by the U.S. in 1997, Gen. Samora complained in his usual manner that the assistance was late and too costly. He said that that USG spent \$2.5 million and the spare parts are really only worth 2.5 million Birr or USD 270,000.

¶5. (C) When Ambassador raised the proposal by Defense Minister Kuma for a bilateral dialogue with ENDF officials on how optimally to use U.S. military training assistance Gen. Samora cut him off arguing that he had discussed these issues with Generals Whitcomb and Ward. Samora argued that while individual training may help that one person, it does not help the group or change things. The General argued that U.S. assistance is needed to help build Ethiopia's own training capacity. Samora did acknowledge a training team sent by General Whitcomb to focus on rules of engagement as the training enabled the ENDF to develop its own manual on the subject. The ENDF is now working on Field Manuals. Samora concluded the subject by declaring that "I have no plan of sending individuals" for training.

#### THE LAMENT OF THE BROKEN PROMISES

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¶6. (C) Despite Gen. Samora's antagonism toward the U.S., he is tremendously influential due to his positions both as CHOD as well as a member of the powerful executive committee of the ruling EPRDF party. Samora is widely noted as pro-China and pro-Israel, but distinctly antagonistic to the U.S. because of criticisms of human rights concerns by U.S. officials. Samora has told the Ambassador in the past that Israel and China are exceptional bilateral partners because of their decorum in helping the ENDF and not criticizing the ENDF and Ethiopia for shortcoming and other problems.

¶7. (C) Ambassador conceded that there had been promises which the USG had not maintained in the past, but noted that the U.S. has shown remarkable results in meeting the needs of the ENDF and Ethiopia and that promises are never made, only concrete results are demonstrated by the U.S. Gen. Samora

responded aggressively, in tone if not demeanor, that the "U.S. did not support a single bullet for our operations in Somalia." Samora reiterated the \$3 million expense for five U.S. civilian contract trainers and argued that \$2.5 million in C-130 spare parts "is nothing" in comparison to the sacrifices made by Ethiopian troops in Somalia without U.S. financial support. Despite 1,500 Ethiopian troops ready to deploy to Darfur, they remain delayed, Samora argued, waiting for promised-yet-undelivered supplies from the U.S. He highlighted that the USG had suspended additional deliveries of HUMVEES in late-2005 as a result of the use of the HUMVEES to transport ENDF troops firing on civilian protesters during the post-2005 election violence which raised serious human rights concerns. The General reiterated his anger made to the previous U.S. Charge that "you can take back the other 16 (HUMVEES) that you gave us before that." Despite noting that the USG's political support is valued within the GoE, Gen. Samora ended the conversation by complaining that Ethiopia had trained 680 Somali Transitional Federal Government troops without U.S. financial support and had recently brought another 1,000 Somali troops for training. "It would be good if the U.S. helped with this," Samora lamented, "but not critical...We can do it ourselves; like everything else we do."

COMMENT

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18. (C) Despite the Ambassador's courtesy meeting with DefMin Kuma Demeksa, it was clear that Kuma, a political operative without military experience, is prevented from playing a role in military procurement and operations by General Samora. The DefMin maintains only minimal awareness of ENDF plans and operations and Gen. Samora holds the reins of power. Kuma's apparent mantra of "I have no information on that subject" -- employed five times in a 45 minute meeting -- only fuels the theory of skeptics that he serves largely as an ethnic Oromo figurehead deferring overwhelmingly to Tigreans like Samora and Prime Minister Meles on substantive military issues. While Post will continue to at least offer the ENDF senior training opportunities in the U.S., we fully understand ENDF's desire to develop local capacity. Current military assistance programming has been re-oriented in consultation with the Ethiopian Government to address this desire by

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focusing on U.S. military trainers, not expensive civilian contractors, and equipment for the EDCSC. Further, we continue to focus on providing spare parts for the ENDF's C-130 to enable the military to better meet its own deployment needs, and looking at another high priority: establishment of a combat engineer battalion.  
YAMAMOTO